



“and their names were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie; and they lived at the bottom of a well——”

“What did they live on?” said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking.

“They lived on treacle,” said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two.

“They couldn’t have done that, you know,” Alice gently remarked. “They’d have been ill.”

“So they were,” said the Dormouse; “*very* ill.”

Alice tried a little to fancy to herself what such an extraordinary way of living would be like, but it puzzled her too much: so she went on: “But why did they live at the bottom of a well?”

“Take some more tea,” the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

“I’ve had nothing yet,” Alice replied in an offended tone: “so I ca’n’t take more.”

“You mean you ca’n’t take *less*,” said the Hatter: “it’s very easy to take *more* than nothing.”

“Nobody asked *your* opinion,” said Alice.

“Who’s making persons?” the Hatter asked triumphantly.

Alice did not quite know what to say, so she helped herself to a bit of butter, and then turned to the Dormouse and repeated her question. “What are you doing at the bottom of a well?”

The Dormouse again thought for a moment, and then said, “I don’t know.”

“There’s no such thing as a free lunch,” said the Hatter very angrily, but the Hatter went “Sh! Sh!” and then marked: “If you ca’n’t be bothered to listen to the story for yourself.”

“No, please go on!” said Alice. “I wo’n’t interrupt you if you like. It may be *one*.”

“One, indeed!” said the Hatter. However, he consented to answer her three little sisters—they were all very kind—and he knew——”

“What did they draw?” said Alice, getting her promise.

“Treacle,” said the Hatter, considering at all, this time.